United Nations CTOC/COP/2018/L.1/Add.3

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: Limited
17 October 2018

Original: English

Ninth session
Vienna, 15–19 October 2018

Draft report

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Addendum

III. Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto

B. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

1. At its 4th and 5th meetings, on 16 and 17 October 2018, the Conference considered agenda item 2 (b), entitled "Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children". For its consideration of the item, the Conference had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretariat on the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote and support the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC/COP/2018/2);

(b) Note by the Secretariat on the reports on the meetings of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons held in Vienna from 6 to 8 September 2017 and on 2 and 3 July 2018 (CTOC/COP/2018/5).

2. An introductory statement was made by a representative of the Secretariat. A statement was also made by a representative of the Chair of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons at its seventh and eighth meetings.

3. Statements were made by the representatives of the European Union (also on behalf of its member States), Thailand, Austria, Kuwait, Brazil, Indonesia, Algeria, the United States, Spain, Colombia, India, the United Kingdom, Belarus, France, Argentina, South Africa, Mexico, Nigeria, Mongolia, Peru, Israel, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

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4. The observers for the non-governmental organizations Soroptimist International, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd and the Academic Council on the United Nations System also made statements.

Deliberations

5. The representative of the Chair of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons at its seventh and eighth meetings, which were held in Vienna from 6 to 8 September 2017 and on 2 and 3 July 2018, referred to the reports on those meetings (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2017/4 and CTOC/COP/WG.4/2018/3) and highlighted that the recommendations adopted at those meetings pertained to effective criminal justice responses to trafficking in persons, the protection and assistance needs of various groups and types of victims, in particular victims of trafficking within mixed migration flows, and the needs and rights of trafficking victims in the context of international cooperation.

6. Many speakers reaffirmed their support for full implementation of the Protocol, noting that it remains the cornerstone for advancing government action against trafficking in persons. Many speakers shared information on recent national actions to enhance legislative frameworks in response to trafficking in persons, as well as prosecutorial and investigative efforts. Many speakers also underlined the importance of regional and international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons.

7. Many speakers provided detailed information about the development of national strategies, plans of action and coordination frameworks, including specialized units, national coordinators and national referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking. Several speakers also referred to the value of engaging the private sector in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including by fostering partnerships with the media and the aviation industry.

8. Several speakers noted that there was a need to strengthen criminal justice capacity by providing technical assistance relating to intelligence-gathering, risk analysis and the development of interviewing skills. Some speakers provided examples of training events for journalists on trafficking in persons and reporting about it, and of activities aimed at building the capacity of consular staff to detect cases of trafficking in persons. The importance of close cooperation with civil society was also underlined.

9. Many speakers highlighted the paramount need for victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches. They stressed the importance of providing appropriate and sufficient support to victims, including health, medical and legal assistance, as well as of protecting them from intimidation. Several speakers underscored the importance of taking gender into account in combating trafficking in persons, and in doing so alleviate the factors that render women and girls vulnerable to this type of crime. Several speakers highlighted the value of engaging with trafficking survivors to inform and improve anti-trafficking programmes and policies.

10. A number of remaining challenges were noted, including the need to better monitor supply chains, trace financial flows and proceeds of crime, and build stronger evidence-based responses to trafficking in persons.

11. Many speakers commended the work of UNODC as a strategic partner in supporting the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in particular through capacity-building activities. Awareness-raising and outreach were similarly highlighted, and UNODC was commended for continuing efforts to assist States in those areas. The role of UNODC as coordinator of the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons was also recognized, and one speaker encouraged Member States to support the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Many speakers underscored that the Protocol could assist Member States in meeting trafficking-related commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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